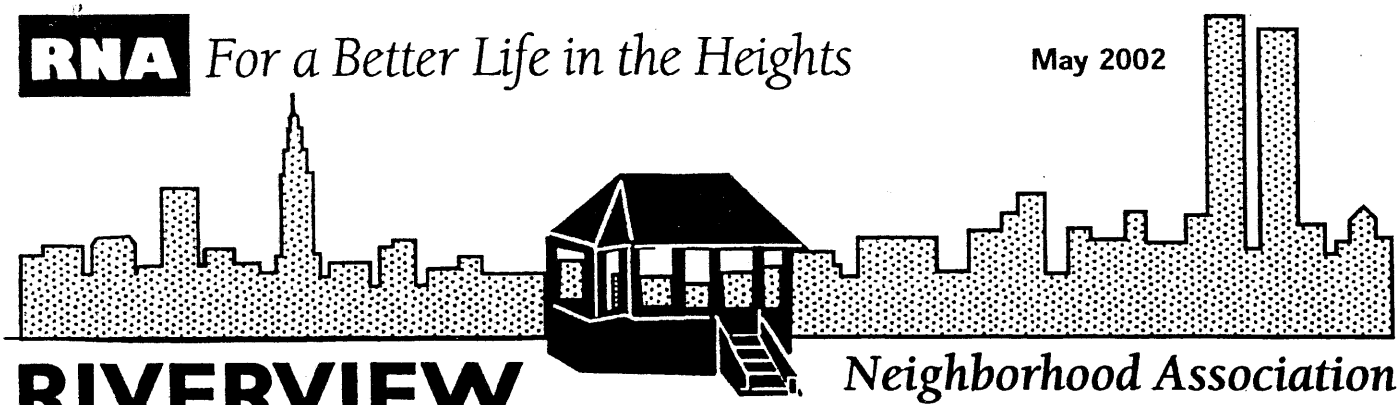
RNA *For a Better Life in the Heights*

May 2002



RIVERVIEW *Neighborhood Association*

469 Palisade Avenue, Jersey City, NJ 07307(201) 386-9481

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION or ELECTED OFFICIAL

18th ANNUAL PARK FAIR

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, June 1st** as the day for RNA's 18th Park Fair and Flea Market. This annual community event will take place outdoors in **Riverview-Fisk Park** between the hours of **9:00 AM to 4:00 PM**. *The rain - date is scheduled for Saturday, June 8th.*

As usual, we need eager volunteers on that day to help coordinate the supplies and tables, greet and coordinate the vendors, monitor parking in the park, serve coffee and refreshments at the Coffee Table, sell donated items at the Donations Table, and do the clean-up. Anything that you can do will be greatly appreciated. We also need individuals to help publicize the event and solicit vendors.

This year, RNA is looking for talented people to showcase their theatrical talents at the Park Fair. If you can sing, dance, play an instrument or entertain in any reasonable fashion, please contact either **Maria Tuzzo** at **(201) 659-2245** or **Margi Daly** at **(201) 963-6564.**

RNA needs your help to make this event successful. It's a great way to meet your neighbors and find out what's happening in your community.

COMMUNITYUPDATES

[*Since the April RNA meeting, there have been no updates regarding the status of the **Cliff Side, Jehovah's Witness** or the **Hope Center** projects.*]

NJT LIGHT RAIL STATION: During this past month, there was much public activity, regarding **New Jersey Transit** (NJT)'s plans for their Light Rail stations to be built along Hoboken's western border at Second Street and Ninth Street. On **Monday, April 8th,** NJT made a presentation to the **Hoboken Environmental Committee** of their plans to a well attended meeting made up of residents from both Hoboken and the Heights community, including members of RNA. NJT presented their design changes to the tower, bridge and headhouse that will connect the Ninth Street station to our community at Congress Street and Paterson Plank Road. The architectural design and color of the building materials was an improvement from the initial proposal made to RNA on January 14th by NJT and the **21th Century Construction Company** (21st Century). Of particular concern were the details of the road improvements for the Second Street station which included the widening of Paterson Plank Road to a five lane highway in the area of the intersection with the existing railroad crossing, Mountain Road and Marshall Street

On **Wednesday, April 10th, Jersey City's City Council** voted overwhelmingly to deny NJT's permission for a temporary easement to begin construction of the Ninth Street Station. The Council cited various concerns, such as the lack of proper notice and consultation with the City and

Continued on page 3

RAT CONTROL ALERT!

Because of the current construction below the Palisade cliffs from both New Jersey Transit's (NJT) Light Rail stations and the Gateway project at 101 Marshall Street in Hoboken, Heights residents have discovered the presence of rodents in our neighborhood. Last year, rodents were also noticed in the area of Ogden Avenue and Cuneo Place because of NJT's underground PATH tunnel renovation along New York Ave.

At the May 1st meeting with NJT, officials promised to bate the cliff and the dirt Mountain Road behind Ogden Avenue to prevent further infestation. Councilman Steve Lipski announced a meeting in mid May to address these problems. (Flyers will be delivered door to door announcing the time and place for this meeting.)

RNA has contacted the **Division of Urban Rodent Control** of the City's Department of Human Resources for information to disseminate to the community. The following suggestions are recommended:

1) Keep food stored safely in the refrigerator or cupboards.
2) Keep garbage in tightly covered cans.
3) Keep yards, basements and halls clean and free of trash and garbage.
4) Get rid of abandoned cars.
5) Caution: When poison, baits and traps are necessary, use them safely and wisely.

Contact the Division at **(201) 547-4476** or **4477**.

CRUCIAL CROSSROADS for LIBERTY STATE PARK'S FUTURE

Friends of Liberty State Park & LSP Conservancy
are sponsoring a **PUBLIC RALLY**
To Abolish the LSP Development Corporation
Saturday, May 11 at 11 am (or earlier) to Noon
CRRNJ Terminal Plaza (in Concourse, if rain)
Limited seating, so bring lawn chairs for comfort.

The **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection** (NJDEP) has given the **Liberty State Park Development Corporation** (DevCorp) until June 2, 2002 to show why it shouldn't be terminated. In his recent "default of contract" notice, **NJDEP Commissioner Bradley Campbell** cited financial mismanagement as found in an Office of Audit review, including the under collection of $833,328 in leasing fees alone!; and he concluded, "it is clear the direction of the DevCorp does not coincide with the mission of LSP."

The DevCorp, the source of endless battles against the public, has now hired lobbyists and lawyers to prevent its termination. Support the NJDEP, which has boldly initiated the welcomed action of getting rid of the arrogant DevCorp. The public's help is urgently needed to put democracy into action for the future of a free People's Park.

Write to **Gov. James E. McGreevey**, urging him to stand firm and get rid of the DevCorp and thank him for NJDEP's important action. Contact the Governor via either postal mail: P.O. Box 001, Trenton, New Jersey, 08625 or e-mail:*www.state.nj.us/governor/govmail.html.*

For more information about the rally,call: Friends/Sam Pesin: 201-792-3767 or Conservancy/Greg Remaud, 732-291-0176.

Additional info can be obtained at these websites:
a) **Friends of Liberty State Park**: *http://www.folsp.org*
b) **Liberty State Park Conservancy**:
http://www.libertystateparkconservancy.com
c) **NY/NJ Baykeeper**: *http://www.nynjbaykeeper.org.*

Preservation Week 2002: A Celebration of Historic Jersey City

The **Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy** celebrates National Historic Preservation Week 2002 with historical walking tours throughout Jersey City. All tours will take place rain or shine. Registration required. Please e-mail *jerseycitytours@yahoo.com* or call **(201) 420-1885** to register and for meeting details.

Saturday, May 11: Historical Heights/Palisades Cliff Walking Tour. 12 noon to 2pm. Co-sponsored by Riverview Neighborhood Association. $5 suggested donation.

Explore Washington Village, an historic Heights neighborhood at the top of the wondrous Palisades, once populated by German and Jewish immigrants. Walk up Paterson Plank Road, an ancient Indian trail. Stand at the site of the former Pathe Studios, a silent film era studio on Ogden Avenue and Congress Street. View the Van Vorst House on Palisade Avenue, believed to be Jersey City's second oldest standing house. Stroll across historic Holland Street, one of the last cobblestone carriage roads in the area. Join us for post-walk refreshments at Robalino's Restaurant.

Sunday, May 12: **The Bergen Arches/6th Street Embankment Greenway Tour.**

Monday, May 13: **Harsimus Cove Historic District Walking Tour.**

Tuesday, May 14: **Bergen Square Walking Tour.**

Wednesday, May 15: **Preservation Awards Ceremony and Reception** at the Landmark Loew's Jersey Theatre, Journal Square.

Friday, May 17: **Powerhouse Arts District Walking Tour.**

Saturday, May 18: **Lafayette History Festival.**

Sunday, May 19: **West Bergen House & Garden Tour.**

The Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization formed to preserve, protect and promote Jersey City's historic buildings, sites, objects and districts. Help support our preservation campaigns by making a tax-deductible contribution today! For more information call Daniel Levin, JCLC Treasurer, at (201) 792-3386, or visit our web site at:*www.jclandmarks.org.*

MEETING MINUTES: Tuesday, April 9, 2002

The meeting opened by **Chair Clif Steinbring** and the new Executive Board. Our first guest speaker was **Bob Hurley,** Director of Recreation, who outlined the many recreational activities he is setting up throughout the City for the summer months.

First, he announced the reopening of the Camp Liberty day camp in Liberty State Park with facilities for swimming, softball, volleyball and basketball. He also stated that the camp could be used for private events, with the city providing lifeguards.

The local facilities for recreation in the Heights and Journal Square, includes School #6, Pershing Field and the Jersey City Armory. Washington Park will not be available for city activities because it is a county facility.

Hurley then discussed the initiation of a variety of sports clinics for boys and girls, starting at the grammar school level, in Riverview-Fisk Park for this season. All the programs in the Park would be limited to children, teenagers and young adults between the ages of 8 to 18 years of age. He also stated that he would insist on residency requirements for all participants and background checks for all employees. He also suggested the hiring of a neighborhood person for the supervisor position of the basketball league.

Hurley also suggested solutions to two problems in our Park. First, he recommended the installation of locked gates for the two entrances of the basketball court to limit the use of the court between 10 AM and 10 PM. He also suggested the designation of another area of the Park for active sports to prevent the destruction of the passive lawns that occurred last year.

The second speaker was **Ron Clemente**, NID represen-

Eighteenth Annual Park Fair & Flea Market

Saturday June 1st
9:00am to 4:00pm
(rain date Saturday June 8th)

Riverview-Fisk Park
(Ogden and Palisade Avenues between Griffith and Bowers Streets)

Sponsored by Riverview Neighborhood Association

For more information and vendor applications:
Call **Maria Tuzzo** at **(201) 659-2245**

tative, who was finally back on the job after a long recovery from a job-related accident. Ron announced that since the NID was presently reduced to 8 employees, it was almost impossible for them to monitor the entire City. His own area was increased to Ogden and Palisade from Griffith to Prospect Street. **Anna Rose Smith**, the other NID manager, was assigned to the north ogden area. However, he recommended that if there is a quality of life problem, a formal complaint should be made to their office and appropriate action would be taken. Ron Clemente can be reached at **(201) 547-4974, extension 8015**.

After that, there was a discussion about the several development projects contemplated for our community and nearby Hoboken. Then the topic of the Light Rail stations planned for Second and Ninth Street in Hoboken was raised and their potential effect on our community. [*For more information about these topics, see CommunityUpdates in this issue.*]

Police Officers Alsina and Timmons gave an update of the crime fighting efforts in our community. There was a recent drug operation on Franklin Street that resulted in four arrests. Several weeks ago, the police confiscated 10 bags of dope in the Park. Members also made complaints about the following problems: two recent car break-ins in the Pohlman Hall parking lot and the occupation of an abandoned house at 50 South Street by unsavory individuals.

Finally, the preparations were discussed for two upcoming events: the Spring clean-up on April 27th and the Park Fair on June 1st. The membership approved the following expenditures: $150.00 for food and refreshments for the clean-up, $50.00 for the purchase of a large market umbrella and stand for the Park Fair and $120.00 for the printing of the February 2002 newsletter. [*For further information about these activities, see the Park Fair article on the frontpage and the advertisement insert and the clean-up article and photograph on page 5.*]

Maria Tuzzo, Secretary

COMMUNITYUPDATES

continued from frontpage

the Heights community regarding these two stations and the continuing problems to local residents of rat infestation, noise, dust and property damage caused by NJT's ongoing renovation of their Palisade underground PATH tunnel.

On **Wednesday, May 1st**, RNA met with 21st Century and a delegation of councilmembers, made up of **Bill Gaughan**, who coordinated the meeting, **Steve Lipski** and **Council President Harvey Smith**. There was another presentation of the revised plans for both stations.The subsequent discussion centered on the above mentioned concerns and also the critical issue of security for commuter safety. RNA members were skeptical of the validity of the project's traffic studies for both the Second and Ninth Street stations because it did not appear to take into account the new Gateway project at 101 Marshall Street in Hoboken or the Cliffside proposal for the old bookbindery in Jersey City. The fear that these projects will just exasperate the existing traffic congestion in this area was met with somewhat deaf ears. RNA demanded that this and future projects should be included in a regional approach to transportation and development planning.

After a short caucus, RNA grudgingly decided to approve NJT's plans, feeling that the concessions were the best that could be gained at this time. It informed the Council that it would not oppose the reintroduction of the resolution for NJT's permits at the next meeting.

GATEWAY PROJECT: Although no official decisions were made regarding this project during the month of April, there was much activity among the individuals determined to stop the two 17-story towers project to be built at 101 Marshall Street in Hoboken. **Judge Arthur D'Italia** adjourned a second hearing till May 10th to allow the developers to continue negotiating with the **Tri-City Sewerage Authority** to rescind the denial of their sewerage permit.

Individuals from both Hoboken and the Heights community have continued to make public statements at the Hoboken City Council meetings requesting the City to stop this project. The community's opposition centers on the following issues: the additional burden the project would place on the existing traffic congestion in the area, the project's lack of adequate parking which will exacerbate the parking problem in both Hoboken and the Heights, the extreme size of the variances for both height and lot coverage, the lack of required notice to Jersey City, the Hoboken Housing Authority and Hudson County. In addition, the Heights community is opposed to this project because it will block the views of and from the Palisade cliffs and the urgent need for regional planning for all future projects in the densely populated area.

The two 17-story towers of the Gateway project will house 326 residential units, two restaurants, a 25,384 square foot health club, 5,240 square feet of retail space and an enclosed parking garage that will rise seven stories with 431 spaces. The towers would rise approximately 158 feet each - 100 feet beyond the normal zoning for that area and almost sixty feet beyond the cliffs themselves.

As this issue went to press, there was an initial meeting between residents of Hoboken and RNA regarding the current proposal to build four 13-story residential towers at 720 Monroe Street in Hoboken and the need to introduce zoning legislation to limit the heights of all new projects along Hoboken's western border to preserve the views of and from the Palisade cliffs.

POLICE: On April 16th, RNA sent a letter to **Captain Joseph Pizzalenti**, the North District Commander of the Jersey City Police Department regarding the problems in our community and specifically in Riverview-Fisk Park. A meeting with RNA's new executive Board was promptly scheduled to discuss these concerns. Local residents have recently noticed groups, or gangs, of ten to fifty young adults assembling in the Park, wandering back and forth across it, then breaking into smaller groups when leaving the Park. Although there is nothing wrong with this behavior, unfortunately the individuals involved are also fighting among themselves and others, causing vandalism in the Park and

in the adjacent streets and there is rampant evidence of drug use and sales among them.

Local residents are complaining of being intimidated to the point where they no longer feel safe using the Park. An example of the secondary effect of this problem occurred when potential buyers of a house near the Park canceled their contract when they saw one of the gangs fighting in the area. When property values fall, we will have deeper problems.

Another problem is the excessive drinking of alcohol and beer in the Park. If one takes a drive down Paterson Plank Road, you can see the effect of this drinking along the cliffslope below the Park - a growing mound of Corona beer cases and bottles being thrown from the Park's lower walkway.

There is also a stepped up amount of drug related activity along the Franklin corridor from Mountain Road to New York or Webster Avenues and centering on Palisade Avenue.

The police were also notified about the three time vandalism of the traffic monitor that was installed on Ogden Avenue off of Bower Street by the City.(The Division of Traffic Engineering admitted that they would not attempt to install a fourth monitor under the current circumstances.) A request was also made to plan for appropriate police coverage for the annual July 4th celebrations in the Park. Finally, RNA requested continuous police presence, reinstatement of the bicycle patrols and the enforcement of the Park's curfew throughout the night.

Since that letter and meeting, the police have stepped up patrols and scheduled the parking of the Mobile Precinct in the Park. Residents have noticed that these efforts seem to be effective in curtailing some of anti-social activities.

PARKS: On April 22nd, RNA wrote a letter to Director Ron Buonocore of the Department of Public Works requesting a meeting and a walk through Riverview-Fisk Park to discuss a list of concerns that need to be addressed for the upcoming spring and summer seasons. The first request was for an immediate clean-up of the damage caused by the recent storm to the trees in the Park. It appears that four to six trees suffered such extensive damage that their complete removal and the planting of new trees will be necessary. Other improvements needed are: the resodding of the barren lawns, the repair of the vandalized bulletin board, the installation of a water line for the community garden, the installation of rumble lines on Ogden Avenue to slow the vehicular traffic through the park and the repair of the children's water fountain located in the Griffith Street lawn.

The letter also requested the DPW to investigate the installation of gates on the two entrances of the Park's basketball court to curtail playing after 10:00 PM. At RNA's April monthly meeting, Bob Hurley, Director of the Department of Recreation, made the suggestion and promised to coordinate the project between the City, the local police and our community. Under the plan, the gates would be locked at 10:00 pm and unlocked the following morning at 10:00 am.

Written by Clif Steinbring and Vito Brunetti

HOBOKEN MEMORIES

Hoboken, where I grew up, was always a favorite with its many theaters. There was always so much to do along the waterfront piers where all the boats and ships were docked. You were never lonely coming home late at night with the many bars along River Street where you could always enjoy a drink.

People were always walking through the streets because of the many industries in town, such as Lipton Tea, Standard Brand, Tootsie Roll, Fergeuson Propellers, Hostess Cup Cake, Wonder Bread to name a few - plus all the many coat companies. There were many beautiful stores along Washington Street where you could buy almost anything. The parks were always full of people and babies playing. And senior citizens just sitting, watching, reading or just passing the time. You knew everyone and everyone had a nickname. We had an uptown and a downtown. You even knew people that kept chickens and goats in their backyards.

First Street was a busy street and a favorite shopping area, with several coffee, grocery and clothing stores. Fifth Street was another street with mostly grocery, vegetable markets and butcher shops. We also had many horse and wagon merchants who sold all kinds of kitchen gadgets, pots, pans, and dishes. The fish wagon would only come around on Friday but the vegetable wagons would come around all week long, shouting out their products for all to hear. There was an oilman, iceman, egg man and anything else you needed. Dugan's came around to sell all kinds of cakes, pies, bread and butter.

Mr. Gordon would come around once a week, selling bedspreads, sheets, curtains and blankets. Many a bride's hope chest was started this way.

We would travel up the new Koven Road from Hoboken to Jersey City, which is now called Mountain Road. There was also a pedestrian staircase, known as the "100 Steps", which connected the two cities. I walked up and down those steps so many times and even in the wee hours of the morning. At the top of the hill, stood the Jersey City Garden or Grotto, as it was sometimes called. There were many dances and boxing matches held there. There was never a problem after the dances with noise or drinking. After the movies on Central Avenue, you could go to the ice cream parlors, like Meyers and Sol's to taste their delicious soft ice cream. They were favorite places to meet.

Jack Rea

Internet Update:

For more information, about our Heights community, go to the *savethepalisades.org* website.

Next month, RNA will start assembling an e-mail directory of members, neighbors and friends for emergency contacts and future transmittal of our newsletter.

Contribute to Your Community Newsletter

Tell us what you think about this newsletter. Send articles, opinions, announcements, poems and recipes to: RNA, 469 Palisade Avenue. Next newsletter deadline is: **May 24th.**

SPRING CLEAN-UP

This year's neighborhood clean-up, took place on Saturday, April 27th, one week after a terrible storm devastated parts of Ogden Avenue and Riverview-Fisk Park. A stately, forty-foot oak tree, over 100 years old, was ripped from its roots and fell across Ogden, south of Griffith Street. Residents on the block were left without electricity, telephone and/or cable service for 24 to 48 hours. The Park lost at least four trees and its paths and street were littered with broken and mangled branches.

Armed with brooms, gloves, rakes and garbage bags, over forty adults and children joined forces to sweep, pick-up and rake the Park's interior. Holland Street was cleaned and even several bags of debris dumped on Mountain Road were picked up.

Special thanks to the following individuals: **Matthew Agnello, Loacknaih Badenath, Doris C. Brown, Beverly Brown Ruggia, Steve Carr, David Casto, Emily Casto, Margi Daly, Len Davis, Joan Earles, Andrew Esposito, Celena Fergusson, Sonia Ferrari-Fontana, Al Festa, Mike Fontana, Johnathan Gomez, Roger Heitmann, Mats Jerndal, Gary Kenny, Debbie Klein, Rick Leon, Kao Lew, Jesus Lora, Kevin Mahony, Joe Mamino, Pat Mangini, Diana Martiny Festa, Lisa Martiny Festa, Sandy Martiny, Anna Mazzola, John McCarthy, Jose Nieves, Chris Pilcher, Pamela Rosenberger, Celeste Ruggia, Gail Sasson, Joe Sadowsky, Katharyn Sanford, Randy Sanford, Rahel Schellenberg, Gail Spinelli, Clif Steinbring, Maria Tuzzo, Cindy Zuanich and Chris Whitlow**.

The clean-up was aided by City workers, from the **Parks and Forestry Division**, who worked both Friday and Saturday to mow the lawns on both sides of the Park. The end result was a pleasant contrast to the unkempt state the Park had fallen into from the recent winter months. The day ended with lunch and refreshments being provided to all the volunteers.

The two City dumpsters located at Griffith Street and Cuneo Place were filled to the brim with household, garbage, debris and broken items.

As usual, thanks are in order to the **Department of Public Works** and the **Incinerator Authority** for their support and cooperation in making this activity a success. A special hats off to **Joe Sadowsky** for his coordination of the weekend's events for the second year.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Support RNA and the community by paying your annual membership dues of **$7.00 per person** at the May 14th meeting or sending a check, payable to RNA, to 232 Ogden Avenue.

Membership entitles you to the monthly newsletter and voting privileges, if you live within the RNA boundaries. RNA's boundaries are **Ogden** and **Palisade Avenues** from **Cuneo Place** to **Congress Street**.

FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
469 PALISADE AVENUE
JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY 07307

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CAR.-RT. PRESORT

See an exciting Slide Presentation
of our Historic Heights Community
at RNA's next meeting
on Tuesday, May 14th at 7:15 PM

COMING EVENTS

RNA MEETING: Tuesday, May 14th, 7:15 PM
Location: Harbor View Health Care Center
Slide presentation: "Jersey City Heights, an Island in the Sky,"
Then & now aerial views and street scenes, narrated by Leon Yost.
Sponsored by The Jersey City Historical Project, Bob Leach, Director.

PUBLIC RALLY To Abolish LSP Development Corp.: Sat., May 11th, 11AM
Organized by the Friends of Liberty State Park
For more information, see the article on page 2.

Historical Heights/Palisades Cliff Walking Tour: Sat., May 11, 12 Noon
Organized by the Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy
For more information, see the article on page 2.

HOLLAND STREET CLEAN-UP: Saturday, May 18th, 9:00 AM
Location: Underpass at Holland Street & Ogden Avenue. Refreshments will be served.
Volunteers Needed. For more information, call **Margi** at **(201) 963-6564.**

18th Annual PARK FAIR & Flea Market: Saturday, June 1st, 9:00 AM
For more information, see the article on the frontpage.